

Appropriations Committee

February 28, 2023

Public Hearing on **H.B. 6659 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2025, and Making Appropriations Therefor.**

Good morning Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Berthel, Representative Nuccio and members of the Appropriations Committee.

Thank you for hearing my testimony today. My name is Annette Bombaci and I am a registered voter from Waterbury Connecticut. I attend the Independence Center and have since I was 18. This non-profit program has helped me in many ways. They taught me how to find and keep a job, they also helped me go to college and helped maintain my own apartment. I transitioned from DCF when I was 18, and I was not ready to be an adult, but the staff at the Independence Center guided me on the right path to gain my independence. I am grateful for all the help they have given me over the years. The Independence Center did so much for all of us during the Pandemic. They started a food delivery program and delivered meals and food bank bags weekly. The staff stayed in touch with us through phone calls, email, and wanted us to know that even though they were closed due to COVID, we still had a support system. The mending art program has been extremely helpful. It gives people a chance to be creative and express their feelings through art and music.

We need the help from our legislators to fund and keep our non-profit services like the Independence Center and other Mental Health Connecticut programs open. I don't know where I would be without the services I receive. Please increase the budget over the next two years and include consideration for inflation. Thank you